MICHIGAN

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

AUDIT REPORT

PERFORMANCE AUDIT
OF THE

PRISONER INTAKE PROCESS

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

April 2005

THOMAS H. MCTAVISH, C.P.A.
AUDITOR GENERAL

47-225-03

"...The auditor general shall conduct post audits of financial transactions and accounts of the state and of all branches, departments, offices, boards, commissions, agencies, authorities and institutions of the state established by this constitution or by law, and performance post audits thereof."

– Article IV, Section 53 of the Michigan Constitution

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REPORT SUMMARY

Performance Audit

Prisoner Intake Process

Department of Corrections

Report Number:
47-225-03

Released:
April 2005

The Department of Corrections (DOC) provides intake processing for male and female prisoners, including youthful offenders. The Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center (RGC), located in Jackson, receives all male prisoners and the Scott Reception Center (SRC), located in Plymouth, receives all female prisoners. Prisoner intake processing includes prisoner orientation, educational/vocational assessment, psychological assessment, health assessment, and classification screening.

Audit Objective:
To evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of DOC's prisoner intake process.

Audit Conclusion:
RGC, which handles the male prisoner intake process, was generally effective and efficient in its prisoner intake process. However, SRC, which handles the female prisoner intake process, was not effective or efficient in its prisoner intake process.

Noteworthy Accomplishments:
DOC consolidated its male intake process, including youthful offenders, into one reception center (RGC). This consolidation streamlined the prisoner intake process and helped to reduce processing time and helped to ensure that prisoners entering the system were handled in a consistent manner. Also, education testing was expanded and vocational testing was added to the male intake process.

Reportable Conditions:
DOC needs to continue to develop its continuous quality improvement process to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of its prisoner intake process (Finding 1).

SRC needs to improve the effectiveness of its intake process to ensure that female prisoners are processed within the time standards established by DOC (Finding 2).

SRC did not properly classify newly incarcerated female prisoners (Finding 3).

DOC did not provide or document that it provided orientation to all newly incarcerated prisoners (Finding 4).

SRC did not perform health examinations of newly incarcerated prisoners during the prisoner intake process. Also, SRC did not properly complete health screening forms to document that prisoners received

various health screenings during the prisoner intake process (Finding 5).

DOC did not consistently document that it ran Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) checks on newly incarcerated prisoners (Finding 6).

DOC needs to increase its efforts to obtain completed sheriff's questionnaires for all newly incarcerated prisoners (Finding 7).

SRC did not conduct prisoner strip searches in accordance with policy directives (Finding 8).

Agency Response:

Our audit report includes 8 findings and 9 corresponding recommendations. The preliminary response from DOC and the two prisoner intake centers indicates that they agree with the recommendations and have complied or will comply with them.

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AUDITOR GENERAL

April 28, 2005

Ms. Patricia L. Caruso, Director
Department of Corrections
Grandview Plaza Building
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Ms. Caruso:

This is our report on the performance audit of the Prisoner Intake Process, Department of Corrections.

This report contains our report summary; description of agency; audit objective, scope, and methodology and agency responses and prior audit follow-up; comment, findings, recommendations, and agency preliminary responses; and a glossary of acronyms and terms.

The agency preliminary response was taken from the agency's response subsequent to our audit fieldwork. The *Michigan Compiled Laws* and administrative procedures require that the audited agency develop a formal response within 60 days after release of the audit report.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us during this audit.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. McTavish, C.P.A.
Auditor General

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DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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Description of Agency

The Department of Corrections (DOC) provides intake processing for male and female prisoners, including youthful offenders.

The Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center (RGC), located within the Charles E. Egeler Correctional Facility in Jackson, receives male prisoners. The Scott Reception Center (SRC), located within the Robert Scott Correctional Facility in Plymouth, receives all female prisoners. Each reception center acts as the main intake point for prisoners with new sentences and for parolees returning to prison for violating parole. The wardens of the Charles E. Egeler and Robert Scott Correctional Facilities administer the operations of the reception centers.

Prisoner intake processing, which occurs at the reception centers, includes:

1. Prisoner Orientation - Prisoners receive information regarding the reception center process and their responsibilities within DOC.

2. Educational/Vocational Assessment - Prisoners are tested to determine their educational and vocational interests. This information is used to better assess and place prisoners within DOC programs.

3. Psychological Assessment - Prisoners receive initial psychological screening, psychological tests, and, if necessary, psychological evaluation by a licensed psychologist.

4. Health Assessment - Prisoners receive their initial intake health screening and a complete physical examination, including dental and vision examinations. This assessment allows the transfer coordinator to identify special health needs, which will affect a prisoner's placement.

5. Classification Screening - Prisoners receive their initial classification screening. This screening includes reviewing all the data gathered from the educational/vocational, psychological, and health assessments along with each prisoner's history, pre-sentence investigation sheet, and current offense. Based on this review, a security classification level (level I, II, III, IV, or V or segregation) is determined.

6. Transfer of Prisoners - Prisoners are transferred to the most appropriate prison location based on classification screening and various program needs and assessments.

DOC's goal is to complete the prisoner intake process within 30 days after a prisoner's arrival at the reception centers.

During calendar years 2002 and 2003, RGC processed 10,575 prisoners and 11,914 prisoners, respectively, and SRC processed 1,183 and 1,111 prisoners, respectively. As of October 31, 2003, the number of employees at the Charles E. Egeler and Robert Scott Correctional Facilities were 759 and 418, respectively.

Audit Objective, Scope, and Methodology and Agency Responses and Prior Audit Follow-Up

Audit Objective

The objective for our performance audit* of the Prisoner Intake Process, Department of Corrections (DOC), was to evaluate the effectiveness* and efficiency* of DOC's prisoner intake process.

Audit Scope

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the prisoner intake process. Our audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and, accordingly, included such tests of the records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

Audit Methodology

Our audit procedures, performed during June 2003 through January 2004, included examining prisoner intake records and activities primarily for the period June 15, 2002 through June 30, 2003.

Our methodology included assessing controls applicable to our audit objective. Our assessment consisted of analyzing statutes, rules, policies, and procedures and interviewing DOC personnel to gain an understanding of management control*.

We reviewed management control related to the prisoner intake process, including the intake admittance, orientation process, and documentation of intake testing and diagnostic services.

We reviewed a sample of prisoner case files from eight correctional facilities that receive prisoners to examine documentation supporting the prisoner intake educational/vocational, psychological, and health assessments as well as classification screening and transfer of prisoners.

* *See glossary at end of report for definition.*

Agency Responses and Prior Audit Follow-Up

Our audit report includes 8 findings and 9 corresponding recommendations. The preliminary response from DOC and the two prisoner intake centers indicates that they agree with the recommendations and have complied or will comply with them.

The agency preliminary response that follows each recommendation in our report was taken from the agency's written comments and oral discussion subsequent to our audit fieldwork. Section 18.1462 of the *Michigan Compiled Laws* and Department of Management and Budget Administrative Guide procedure 1280.02 require DOC to develop a formal response to our audit findings and recommendations within 60 days after release of the audit report.

We released our prior performance audit of the Reception Centers, Department of Corrections (#4722591), in November 1991. DOC complied with 6 of the 7 prior audit recommendations. The other prior audit recommendation was rewritten for inclusion in this report.

COMMENT, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSES

EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE PRISONER INTAKE PROCESS

COMMENT

Audit Objective: To evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department of Correction's (DOC's) prisoner intake process.

Conclusion: The Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center (RGC), which handles the male prisoner intake process, was generally effective and efficient in its prisoner intake process. However, the Scott Reception Center (SRC), which handles the female prisoner intake process, was not effective or efficient in its prisoner intake process. Our evaluation disclosed reportable conditions* related to the continuous quality improvement (CQI) process, the prisoner intake process, security classification, prisoner orientation, health examinations, Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) checks, sheriff's questionnaires, and strip searches (Findings 1 through 8).

Noteworthy Accomplishments: DOC consolidated its male intake process, including youthful offenders, into one reception center (RGC). This consolidation streamlined the prisoner intake process and helped to reduce processing time and helped to ensure that prisoners entering the system were handled in a consistent manner. Also, education testing was expanded and vocational testing was added to the male intake process.

In addition, the Robert Scott Correctional Facility (SCF) was first accredited in 1990 by the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections and has retained its accreditation without interruption.

FINDING

1. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Process

   DOC needs to continue to develop its CQI process to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of its prisoner intake process.

   A comprehensive process to evaluate effectiveness and identify potentially needed program changes would enhance DOC's ability to screen and assess newly incarcerated prisoners. Such a process should include: performance indicators* for

* *See glossary at end of report for definition.*

measuring outputs* and outcomes*; performance standards* or goals* that describe the desired level of outputs and outcomes based on management expectations, peer group performance, and/or historical performance; a management information system to accurately gather relevant output and outcome data on a timely basis; a comparison of the actual data to desired outputs and outcomes; a reporting of the comparison results to management; and recommendations to improve effectiveness and efficiency or change the desired performance standards or goals.

Although DOC had established performance indicators and performance standards, it did not maximize the use of a CQI process to evaluate the effectiveness of its prisoner intake process.

Specifically, our review disclosed:

a. DOC had not compared actual intake activities with desired outputs, such as the maximum processing time standards established by policy.

   Periodic comparison of intake activities would assist DOC staff in evaluating their intake performance in relation to established standards.

b. DOC had not implemented a methodology to assimilate information related to prisoner intake activity.

   DOC established two systems, the Corrections Management Information System (CMIS) and the Offender Management Network Information (OMNI) System, that are designed to document the activity of persons incarcerated in a Michigan prison. Both CMIS and the OMNI System record significant output and outcome data, including basic prisoner information, prisoner movement, health care activity, and prisoner security classification information. However, DOC had not implemented a process to obtain and evaluate data related to prisoner intake.

   Assimilating the information from both CMIS and the OMNI System is necessary to perform the comparison referred to in item a.

* *See glossary at end of report for definition.*

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend DOC continue to develop its CQI process to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of its prisoner intake process.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

SRC agrees and informed us that it is taking steps to comply by establishing a system to track intake activity outputs and to compare them with performance standards. In addition, SRC will include representatives from additional reception center areas in its monthly performance improvement meetings. SRC informed us that issues, concerns, and data are evaluated and a plan of action is initiated as necessary. In addition, SRC informed us that follow-up is also performed.

RGC agrees and informed us that it continues to meet weekly with DOC supervisors from all facets of the intake process to identify opportunities to improve performance. RGC will take steps to improve this process by documenting its review of intake activity outputs to performance standards.

FINDING

2. Prisoner Intake Process

SRC needs to improve the effectiveness of its intake process to ensure that female prisoners are processed within the time standards established by DOC.

The development and implementation of an effective female prisoner intake process would help SRC ensure that female prisoner intake processing is provided in an efficient and consistent manner.

DOC policy directive 04.01.105 and operating procedure 04.01.105A provide that intake processing should normally be completed within a 30-day period. Intake processing includes orientation; educational/vocational, psychological, and health assessments; and classification screening.

Our review disclosed:

a. SRC did not coordinate the scheduling of intake services by allocating staff to the intake process on specific days and at specific times. As a result, inefficiencies occurred. For example, prisoners who were completing a

psychological test were called out during the test to take their health examination. According to SRC staff, the health examination was a higher priority; thus, the prisoners had to be scheduled for the psychological test at a later date.

b. SRC did not comply with DOC policies and procedures for required intake processing time lines.

We reviewed 60 SRC case files and determined that SRC staff did not complete the intake process within the 30-day time period for 50 (83%) of 60 female prisoners reviewed. The intake process for these 50 prisoners was completed within a range of 31 to 119 days, with an average of 52 days.

Our analyses disclosed the following variances in specific processes:

(1) The average time to complete the initial psychological testing for prisoners was 23 days.

SRC operating procedure 05.01.101 states that newly incarcerated prisoners, in general, are scheduled for psychological testing within one week of arrival at the reception center.

(2) The average time from reception to approval of the initial classification screen was 41 days.

DOC operating procedure 04.01.105A states that processing from intake through security classification should occur within a 30-day period for newly incarcerated prisoners.

(3) The average time to complete a psychological evaluation was 30 days.

DOC policy directive 03.04.100, section Q(2)(f), requires that any necessary psychological testing and additional evaluation shall be completed within 14 calendar days after arrival at the reception center.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that SRC improve the effectiveness of its intake process to ensure that female prisoners are processed within the time standards established by DOC.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

SRC agrees and informed us that it is more closely monitoring the timeliness of intake process activities and taking necessary steps to improve timely completion of the activities, including health and psychological assessments, to ensure that prisoners are processed within the time standards established by DOC.

FINDING

3. Security Classification

SRC did not properly classify newly incarcerated female prisoners.

Proper security classification of all prisoners helps ensure public safety and the safety and security of each prison. If prisoners are inappropriately assigned to lower classifications, they may be placed in lower security levels, resulting in an endangerment to prison staff and other prisoners.

Upon receipt into the DOC system, prisoners are processed through the reception center and screened using the initial security classification screen form (CSJ-480). Categories of security classification include (from least to most secure) levels I, II, III, IV, and V and segregation.

Our review of 60 female prisoner case files disclosed:

a. SRC moved 11 (18%) intake prisoners into the SCF general population at a higher security level using a classification "departure." The reason provided for the classification departure was that the prisoners were waiting for intake completion. However, these prisoners had completed the intake process; thus, it was unnecessary to use a classification departure.

   Classification departures are to be used only for prisoner security needs, such as when the prisoner requires closer supervision because of recent misconducts, overall criminal history, and/or assaultive behavior.

b. SRC transferred 44 (73%) intake prisoners to the SCF general population prior to initial classification approval.

DOC policy directive 04.01.105, section B(1), states: "The Warden or designee shall initiate a transfer to another facility if necessary based on the results of the security and risk classification review." Although, this directive does not solely apply to the intake process, it implies that classifications must be completed prior to transfer.

In addition, 38 (86%) of the 44 female prisoners had not completed their intake processing prior to transfer to the SCF general population.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that SRC properly classify newly incarcerated female prisoners.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

SRC agrees and informed us that it is taking steps to comply by training staff in the proper use of departures. In addition, SRC informed us that it is taking steps to ensure that intake processing is complete and initial classification screens are approved before a prisoner is transferred to the general population.

FINDING

4. Prisoner Orientation

DOC did not provide or document that it provided orientation to all newly incarcerated prisoners.

Providing prisoner orientation to all newly incarcerated prisoners will help to reduce the anxiety related to incarceration and assist prisoners with adjusting to institutional rules and lifestyles.

DOC policy directive and operating procedure 04.01.140 and operating procedure 04.01.105A state that orientation should take place within the first week of a prisoner's arrival at the reception center. Also, the orientation program should discuss access to health care, the disciplinary and grievance process, prison pitfalls and their consequences, seriousness of escape and the consequences, and

human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) training.

At RGC, we reviewed 84 male prisoners' case files and could not verify that 26 (31%) prisoners received orientation.

SRC's orientation process consists of four segments that are provided to the female prisoners as time permits.

At SRC, we reviewed 60 female prisoners' case files and found:

a. Eleven (18%) prisoners did not receive the initial orientation.

b. Eleven (18%) prisoners did not receive the time calculation orientation.

c. Four (7%) prisoners did not receive the HIV/AIDS orientation.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that DOC provide and document that it provided orientation to all newly incarcerated prisoners.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

DOC agrees and will create a form(s) to document receipt of orientation for each prisoner and will take steps to ensure that orientation forms are contained in prisoner files before prisoners transfer out of the reception center.

FINDING

5. Health Examinations

SRC did not perform health examinations of newly incarcerated prisoners during the prisoner intake process. Also, SRC did not properly complete intake health screening forms to document that prisoners received various health screenings during the prisoner intake process.

Performing required health examinations and screenings helps ensure that immediate health needs are addressed and that intake staff properly plan for prisoners' future medical needs.

DOC policy directive 03.04.100 requires a health screening and full health appraisal for each prisoner received at a reception center.

Our review of 60 female prisoner case files at SRC disclosed:

a. SRC did not perform 7 (12%) health examinations during the prisoner intake process.

   DOC policy directive 03.04.100 states that health examinations shall be completed for each prisoner within 14 calendar days after arrival at a reception center.

   The 7 health examinations were subsequently performed 6 to 105 days after the completion of the prisoners' intake process and 49 to 141 days (an average of 74 days) after the prisoners' arrival at the reception center.

b. SRC did not perform 2 (3%) dental examinations during the prisoner intake process.

   DOC policy directive 03.04.100, section Q(2)(e), states that dental examinations shall be completed for prisoners within 14 calendar days after arrival at a reception center.

c. SRC did not date or completely prepare various intake health screening forms:

   (1) Nine (15%) prisoner sexual/physical abuse screening forms were not dated.

   (2) Six (10%) prisoner tuberculosis screening forms were not completely prepared.

   (3) Two (3%) prisoner suicide prevention screening forms were not completely prepared.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that SRC perform health examinations of newly incarcerated prisoners during the prisoner intake process.

We also recommend that SRC properly complete intake health screening forms to document that prisoners received various health screenings during the prisoner intake process.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

SRC agrees and informed us that it has established an intake nurse position to improve the timeliness of health examinations and that SRC is logging and monitoring the timeliness of health care and dental examinations.

Regarding the intake screening forms, SRC indicated that certain information is recorded on the forms in advance of the health screening encounter to assist in ensuring completeness. SRC also indicated that nursing staff are scheduled to attend orientation and training with the intake nurse to provide backup for the intake nurse position. SRC will monitor the completeness of the health screening forms.

FINDING

6. Law Enforcement Information Network (LEIN) Checks

DOC did not consistently document that it ran LEIN checks on newly incarcerated prisoners.

LEIN checks help to establish each prisoner's initial security classification as pending felony charges can raise a prisoner's security classification from a level I to a level II. Also, DOC staff use information obtained from LEIN to prepare pending charge letters to appropriate jurisdictions.

DOC policy directive 04.01.105 requires that a LEIN check be completed for each new prisoner received.

To indicate that a LEIN check was performed, RGC stamped "LEIN" on the male prisoners' files. SRC did not document that female prisoners were checked through LEIN unless the check identified a felony charge or an arrest warrant.

We noted:

a. At RGC, 7 (7%) of 102 male intake prisoner files reviewed were not stamped.

b. At SRC, 22 (37%) of 60 female intake prisoner files reviewed did not document a LEIN check.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that DOC consistently document that it has run LEIN checks on newly incarcerated prisoners.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

RGC and SRC agree and will comply by instructing staff to ensure that a LEIN check is documented on or in the prisoner file before the prisoner is transferred out of the reception center.

FINDING

7. Sheriff's Questionnaires

DOC needs to increase its efforts to obtain completed sheriff's questionnaires for all newly incarcerated prisoners.

Information within the sheriff's questionnaires helps reception center staff determine prisoners' escape risk and custody requirements as well as their mental and physical health needs. Completed questionnaires contain information regarding matters such as prisoner involvement in attempted escape, assault, or homosexual behavior; attempted suicide; or known enemies.

Local law enforcement officers, usually county sheriffs, transport prisoners to the DOC reception centers. DOC policy directive 04.01.105 states that local law enforcement officers must provide a judgment of sentence, a pre-sentence investigation report, and a sheriff's questionnaire for all prisoners delivered. Also, DOC policy directive 04.06.115 requires reception center staff to review the sheriff's questionnaire. DOC informed us that it routinely requests the questionnaires; however, some counties refuse to comply.

Our review disclosed that 51 (85%) of 60 case files from SRC did not contain a sheriff's questionnaire. Two (3%) additional SRC files contained incomplete sheriff questionnaires. Our review also disclosed that only 1 (1%) RGC case file did not contain a sheriff's questionnaire. However, 28 (27%) of 102 RGC case files contained incomplete sheriff's questionnaires.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that DOC increase its efforts to obtain completed sheriff's questionnaires for all newly incarcerated prisoners.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

DOC agrees and will increase its efforts to obtain completed sheriff's questionnaires by contacting sheriff offices.

FINDING

8. Strip Searches

SRC did not conduct prisoner strip searches in accordance with policy directives.

Strip searches help ensure that contraband is not brought into the reception center. Also, strip searches identify prisoners who have wounds or gang-related tattoos that require intake staff to perform additional processing steps.

DOC policy directive 04.01.105 states that prisoners shall be searched for contraband when received, and DOC policy directive 04.04.110 provides for strip searches as a means to inspect the prisoner's body for contraband whenever a prisoner is brought into a correctional facility from an off-site location.

On two different occasions, we observed the intake processing of prisoners. On each occasion, we observed the processing of five prisoners and noted that strip searches and visual inspections were not completed by the officer in charge.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that SRC conduct prisoner strip searches in accordance with policy directives.

AGENCY PRELIMINARY RESPONSE

SRC agrees and will comply by providing training to SRC custody staff. In addition, SRC supervisory staff will monitor staff to ensure that searches are conducted in accordance with policy.

GLOSSARY

Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

CMIS	Corrections Management Information System.
CQI	continuous quality improvement.
DOC	Department of Corrections.
effectiveness	Program success in achieving mission and goals.
efficiency	Achieving the most outputs and outcomes practical with the minimum amount of resources.
goals	The agency's intended outcomes or impacts for a program to accomplish its mission.
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome.
LEIN	Law Enforcement Information Network.
management control	The plan of organization, methods, and procedures adopted by management to provide reasonable assurance that goals are met; resources are used in compliance with laws and regulations; valid and reliable data is obtained and reported; and resources are safeguarded against waste, loss, and misuse.
OMNI System	Offender Management Network Information System.
outcomes	The actual impacts of the program.
outputs	The products or services produced by the program.

performance audit	An economy and efficiency audit or a program audit that is designed to provide an independent assessment of the performance of a governmental entity, program, activity, or function to improve public accountability and to facilitate decision making by parties responsible for overseeing or initiating corrective action.
performance indicators	Information of a quantitative or qualitative nature used to assess achievement of goals and/or objectives.
performance standard	A desired level of output or outcome.
reportable condition	A matter that, in the auditor's judgment, represents either an opportunity for improvement or a significant deficiency in management's ability to operate a program in an effective and efficient manner.
RGC	Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center.
SCF	Robert Scott Correctional Facility.
SRC	Scott Reception Center.

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